

REMARKS:

The Office Action dated August 10, 1992 has been received and carefully reviewed. Reconsideration of the above entitled application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Applicant will submit formal inked drawings for the present application upon receipt of a notice of allowance.

Applicant submits a proposed amended title to the present application reading: --NOTEBOOK COMPUTER WITH REVERSIBLE COVER FOR EXTERNAL USE OF MEMBRANE SWITCH SCREEN--. If the proposed title does not meet the Examiner's requirements, applicant requests that the Examiner suggest a satisfactory title.

Applicant notes the Examiner's requirement to update the Cross-Reference to Related Applications. Parent application, Serial No. 07/420,047 is still pending and is under a requirement to amend the title thereof. Upon a notice of allowance in the parent application or upon the conclusion of prosecution on the merits in the present application, applicant will request an amendment to update the Cross-Reference to Related Applications.

Amendments are requested to correct the section titles in the specification, as required by the Examiner.

Applicant, under 37 CFR 1.56(a), submits herewith an abstract from the October 13, 1992 Official Gazette related to Design Patent No. 330,197, issued to T. Kajita. A complete copy of the Kajita patent has been ordered, and will be submitted when

received.

Applicant has executed and submits herewith a new declaration which is believed to include the recitations required for claiming benefit of 35 USC 120 in a continuation-in-part application.

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application. Claims 13, 15, 17, 19, and 20 have been amended.

Claim 1 is an independent claim and calls for a portable computer unit comprising essentially: a portable computer housing; computer means within the housing; flat panel display means; a transparent membrane switch array overlayed on the display means; and closure panel means having the display means and array mounted on one side of it and connected to the housing in such a manner as to enable the closure panel means to be positioned on the housing with the display means facing either toward the housing or away from the housing. Claim 1 does not recite a keyboard on the housing, but also does not rule out the presence of such a keyboard.

Claim 20 is an amended independent claim which is generally similar to Claim 1 except that Claim 20 adds a plurality of key switches and does not specifically recite the reversibility of the closure panel of Claim 1. Claim 20 specifies that the closure panel be connected to the housing with the display means and array facing away from the key switches and in such a manner

as to enable pivoting the closure panel to provide access to the key switches, but does not rule out the possibility of the closure panel being reversed to face the display means toward the user nor does Claim 20 rule out the use of a second display means positioned on the inside surface of the closure panel.

Claim 12 is also an independent claim and is generally similar to Claim 1 with the addition of a keyboard on the housing and hinge means connecting the closure panel to the housing and electrical connector means interfacing the display means and the membrane switch array to the computer means, the hinge means and connector means cooperating to enable the closure panel to be positioned with the display means facing the keyboard or alternatively with the display means and array facing away from the housing to facilitate operation of the array while viewing the display means.

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as obvious from Paulsen et al. 4,571,456 in view of Smith 4,928,094. Paulsen et al. discloses a laptop type computer which is substantially conventional, except for its housing constructed of magnesium, including a base housing and a display housing which are pivotally connected. Smith discloses a display panel which is touch operated by the use of corresponding arrays of LED's 18 and phototransistors 20. Smith's display panel does not include an overlayed membrane switch array as applicant claims and would be

functionally inferior for applicant's purposes; however, Smith's panel appears to be functionally similar to applicant's overlayed membrane switch array.

The Examiner acknowledges that Paulsen does not recite the use of a touch sensitive display or flipping the display means over to face the display means away from the keyboard (as called for in Claims 1, 12, and 20) and recognizes that flipping Paulsen's display would make access to the keyboard difficult. The Examiner then asserts that Fig. 22 and others suggest that Paulsen's hinge is so constructed that the display is removable from the base housing. Paulsen's text and Fig. 26 discloses that a display cover is snapped into the display frame and is removable therefrom.

Referring to Paulsen's exploded perspective in Fig. 22, the hinge arrangement is complicated by the passage of the cable 83 through a bearing 85 and the location of the stop pin 343 in the guide channel. Additionally, no connector is shown for the cable. A fair reading of Paulsen provides no disclosure or suggestion that the display frame itself (which is comparable to applicant's claimed closure panel) is intended to be removable from the base housing by the user by separation of the hinge, much less reversed and reconnected, as called for in Claims 1 and 12. A combination of Paulsen and Smith only results in a substantially conventional laptop computer with a touch operated

screen. However, neither Paulsen nor Smith suggests its combination with the other.

Applicant urges that Paulsen in combination with Smith does not suggest the reversed closure panel arrangement called for in Claims 1, 12, and 20, does not suggest the problems caused by such reversal of the closure panel, and does not suggest solutions to the problems. Thus, applicant believes the obviousness of Claims 1, 12, and 20 from the combination of Paulsen et al. and Smith can only result from impermissible hindsight reconstruction based on applicant's invention. Applicant, therefore, urges that Claims 1, 12, and 20 should be allowable over any combination of Paulsen et al., Smith, and the other cited references.

Claims 2-11 inclusive depend from Claim 1, and Claims 13-19 inclusive depend from Claim 12. Each dependent claim adds further details to its parent claim and is believed to distinguish over the cited references for the same reasons as Claim 1 or Claim 12 respectively.

Claims 1-20 inclusive are presented for reconsideration. Applicant contends that said claims call for notebook computers with reversible covers for external use of membrane switch screens which are not disclosed by or obvious from any of the references of record, either singly or in combination. Thus, the allowance of Claims 1-20 inclusive is earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is invited to contact applicant's attorney at the below listed telephone number in the event it is felt the prosecution of this application can be expedited thereby.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231 on November 10, 1992.

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By 

November 10, 1992

(Date of Signature)